

The Romance of Empire: John Buchan's Early Writings

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The subject of what follows is the resurgence of the Romance as a narrative form or mode in Britain in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods and in its relation to what is conventionally termed 'New Imperialism', the massive British territorial expansion at the end of the nineteenth century and the political formalisation of the idea of Empire which accompanies it. After a relatively brief general discussion of the topic in its broadest terms, the paper will concentrate on the early writings (1894-1914) of John Buchan, a major contributor to both Romantic narrative and the political discourse of Imperialism in the period.¹⁾

To approach this topic we must initially recognize the potentially regressive as well as the actually progressive in the response to the process of industrialisation during the Romantic Revolution; that is, for example, the recurrent fantasy of archaic social relations in Romanticism's neo-Mediaevalism, and the potential for theories of racial and national supremacy in its desire for return to origins, as well as those louder voices raised in support of the French Revolution or against the system of slavery inherent in the old Colonialism. For this regressive impulse within Romanticism becomes more dominant in the late Victorian period, and not merely in the literary sphere, as Eric Hobsbawm, more clearly than anyone else, has shown:²⁾ in the economic sphere, it is then that Britain, in the face of competition from the newly industrialised economies of, particularly, Germany and the USA, finally retreats into an archaic and forced, but mutually debilitating commercial and political relationship with its formal Empire; and in the social sphere, it is then that the dominant class largely invents an immensely powerful set of pseudo-aristocratic social and cultural 'traditions' which attempt to freeze an anachronistic social hierarchy in the metropolitan society, and impose a related mythical racial hierarchy in the outposts of Empire.

In the cultural sphere, the contributions to and the reactions against this process are many and complex, and a more complete analysis would include attention to many of the major and minor poetic 'movements' of the period in this light: Asceticism and Decadence, Pre-Raphaelitism, Bohemianism, Arcadianism, and Georgianism. The concern here is with that rather more general and widespread turning away from social realism towards Romance in the fiction of the period, which has still perhaps received less than its due critical attention and never been

granted the status of an '-ism', in part at least because the dominant form of attention accorded to narrative in the modern academy originates in Modernist discourse, and more particularly in the narrative theories of Henry James, which largely operate within the conflict between social and psychological realism and are almost entirely antipathetic to the forms of Romance.

Not only do Robert Louis Stevenson's narratives herald this resurgence of the Romance but his companion essays of the 1880s 'A Gossip on Romance' (1882) and 'A Humble Remonstrance' (1884) provide the most clear and overt apology for the form. Let us look at one or two passages:

There is a vast deal in life and letters both ... where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms or the diplomacy of life.³⁾

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places... The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it.⁴⁾

Now in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering or virtue. But the characters are still themselves, they are not us ... It is not character but incident that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves ... Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say that we have been reading a romance.⁵⁾

The obvious is not of necessity the normal; fashion rules and deforms; the majority fall tamely into the contemporary shape, and thus attain, in the eyes of the true observer, only a higher power of insignificance; and the danger is lest, in seeking to draw the normal, a man should draw the null, and write the novel of society instead of the romance of man.⁶⁾

Formalising Stevenson's argument, and at the same time borrowing some of the language of Formalism, we might suggest the following table contrasting the Romance and the novel of character:

Romance	Novel
event	character
action	thought
story	discourse
evocation of place	description of manners
childhood daydreams	adult life in society
reader empathetic	reader critical

In supplement to these elements isolated by Stevenson, in characterising the late Victorian Romance we may add the following tripartite structure by modifying the work of John G Cawelti:7)

- i) a HERO, with an implicit or explicit chivalric code of conduct, which the reader is assumed to participate in;
- ii) who undertakes or acquires a dangerous MISSION or QUEST;
- iii) which involves some form of encounter with the OTHER.

This structure is, perhaps, characteristic of the Romance in all its historical manifestations. In the period in question here, which is also the period of the emergence of many of the different formulas of contemporary Popular fiction, we can distinguish four different versions of the Romance according to the nature of the Other:

- A) The ADVENTURE Romance where the encounter is with alien (primitive) societies and cultures;
- B) The SCIENTIFIC Romance where the encounter is with alien beings or worlds, or an illicit past or future;
- C) The HISTORICAL Romance where the encounter is normally with a military enemy (though from the point of view of the reader it is with the past itself);
- D) The GOTHIC Romance where the encounter is with alien states of being, whether supernatural or psychological.

Stevenson's own major contribution is to the Historical Romance, though in *Treasure Island* (1883) and *Dr Jeckyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), for example, he works with the Adventure and Gothic forms respectively. If Stevenson is the name that remains most closely associated with the Historical version, H Rider Haggard and HG Wells must stand for the Adventure and Scientific versions respectively. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is perhaps the writer who engages most thoroughly with all four categories: his *Tragedy of the Korosko*, (1898) *Lost World* (1912), *Sir Nigel* (1806), and *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), for example, represent respectively the Adventure, Scientific, Historical, and Gothic versions. Two general points need to be emphasised: firstly, that these four versions of the Romance are rarely rigorously separated, but tend to combine and merge, so that Doyle's *Lost World* and Wells' *First Men on The Moon* (1901), for example, inhabit the borders between Scientific and Adventure Romance; and secondly, that the Romance does not always exist as a distinct narrative form in this period, but is often one mode among several within a single fiction. This is especially true of the Gothic version. Other major writers of the period including Conrad, Kipling, even Henry James, and later Maugham and Forster can be read in this light. If in this period Romance is most at home in the

emerging genres of popular fiction, it also manages to infiltrate the high places of Modernist narrative.8)

If the above gives us some outline of the forms and instances of late Victorian Romance, it remains to give some general indication of the motivation and the function of this resurgence. The suggestion is that there is a close relationship between the impulse to Romance and the development of the institutions and ideas of the British Empire at the turn of the century. Such a suggestion is clearly incontestable in the case of the Adventure Romance. The model for the late Victorian Adventure Romance was indeed the published narratives of (predominantly African) missionaries or explorers, such as Harry Johnston, Joseph Thompson, Samuel Baker White, and of course, Livingstone and Stanley themselves. Of these, all but Livingstone published at least one fictional adventure story with theme and narrative mode not dissimilar from their own travellers' tales.9) Or again H Rider Haggard's Romances have a clear basis in his own administrative experience in Southern Africa.10)

Further, if we trace the literary representations of non-European cultures we can see a marked shift from, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the dominance of the mode of exoticism (Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' (1816), for example), the theme of the noble savage and the cause of the abolition of the Slave Trade (both seen in Southey's 'Poems concerning the Slave Trade' (1807), for example), through a period a relative indifference to such questions in the mid-century (perhaps best represented by Dickens' derisive attitude to Mrs Jellyby's Borrioboola-Gha mission on the Niger in *Bleak House* (1852-3)) to, by around 1870, the overwhelming predominance of the mode of popular adventure narrative with its manichean landscape, its theme of racial hierarchy, and its cause of the expansion or defence of the Empire. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw a large expansion in the number of such adventure stories published, not only as novels but also as serial and short stories in a proliferating number of popular magazines with an imperial theme, very frequently written for boys and with juvenile heroes, and carrying out a very simple and specific ideological function.11)

But it is clear that not all Adventure Romances performed such a simple ideological operation; and it is also contended here that the role of justifying Empire was by no means limited to the Adventure version of Romance. In brief, the argument, deriving ultimately from Frederic Jameson's concept of 'the political unconscious' and more directly from Franco Moretti's use of it which emphasises above all the role of genre in literary displacements of the political,12) is that the late Victorian Romance as a form serves both to articulate and to conceal the contradictory desire to escape from the industrial landscape of the metropolitan

culture into an unspoiled region of the 'natural'; this allows at least an implicit recognition of the alienation and reification of industrial capitalism, and, at the same time, through a constant shifting of the category of the 'natural' towards the 'other' (whether the primitive, the unconscious, or the alien), to reconfirm the threatened values of the metropolitan culture. This contradiction corresponds to the major contradiction of the New Imperialism, which, with its massive territorial expansion and its political formalisation of the concept of Empire, represents both the culmination of earlier commercial practice, and the reaction against it, in the form of the occlusion of the dominant economic motivation of colonisation behind a nationalist and racialist myth of a civilising mission.

Let us now to go on to explore the dynamics of these conflicts more specifically in the context of the early writings of John Buchan. But since Buchan remains far from well-known as a writer, and since his Imperialism is intimately connected with his public roles, it may not be redundant to take up a few lines in offering a brief life.

John Buchan was born in the manse of the Free Church of Scotland at Perth in 1875, the eldest son of the minister. He spent his childhood in Pathhead, near Kirkcaldy, Fife, and his adolescence in Glasgow, where his father was variously called; his sense of home remained the upper Tweed valley between Peebles and Broughton, in the Borders region of the Scottish Lowlands, from where both his parents hailed, and where he spent most of his summer holidays with his grandparents. From grammar school in Glasgow, he went on to Glasgow University, later transferring to Brasenose College, Oxford, graduating in 1899, by which time he had already published half a dozen books (verse, essays, a history, as well as fiction), become President of the Union, and made a number of influential friends. After the initial collapse of his plans to enter the academic world, his later career was varied but uniformly successful; he was consecutively or concurrently a barrister, a journalist, principally with the *Spectator* and the *Times*, an Imperial administrator in South Africa in the period of 'reconstruction' after the Boer War, a publisher with Nelsons, Director of Intelligence for the Ministry of Information during the Great War, Director of Reuters, Unionist Member of Parliament for the Scottish Universities, High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Governor-General of Canada, and Member of the House of Lords as Baron Tweedsmuir of Elsfield, the village outside Oxford which he had made his home after the war. Having suffered greatly from duodenal ulcers for much of his adult life, Buchan died of a cerebral thrombosis in Ottawa in 1940.

Despite this plethora of public roles, he managed to publish, besides numerous pamphlets, speeches, journalistic articles and essays, contributions and introductions,

over seventy full-length books, only around half of which are fiction. Of the remainder, the major categories are histories (of Brasenose College, the Great War, the Kirk in Scotland, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, etc), memoirs and biographies (memoirs of friends killed in the war and Lords Ardwall and Minto, biographies of Walter Scott, Julius Caesar, Cromwell, Montrose, Raleigh, his own autobiography, among others) and collections of essays; more unusual items are a treatise on the taxation of foreign income and an anthology of poems concerning fishing. The fiction itself includes, in approximate quantitative order, spy and other thrillers, historical novels, collections of short stories, adventure stories, and fictional symposia, almost all of which are dominated by the mode of Romance, a mode which is also readily apparent in many of Buchan's histories and biographies.

This is obviously an embarrassment of riches. And indeed Buchan has always been something of an academic embarrassment. Apart from Janet Adam Smith's superb biography, and fine extended essays by Gertrude Himmelfarb and Alan Sandison, Buchan has attracted little sustained critical attention of any note.¹³) His thrillers remain perennially popular and have been filmed and televised on many occasions, certain of his biographies and histories have a scholarly reputation for style and insight, but he refuses to conform to the available categories. Like a Renaissance gentleman manqué, he is neither a complete man of letters nor a complete man of action; 'the last Victorian', in Gertrude Himmelfarb's phrase, he survived to witness the rise of fascism; his fiction refuses alike the categories of the juvenile, the popular, and the serious; his politics, from the viewpoint of a contemporary liberal consensus, compound the balanced, the naive, and the scandalous. It is precisely the embarrassment of Buchan's position, the diversity of his public roles and public discourse, the encounter in his work of the political consciousness and the political unconscious, the Imperialist and the Romancer, that is of interest here. Buchan's pre-war writings, which reveal the simultaneous construction of his Imperialist creed and his version of the Romance, will be considered in three narrative stages, which are as much analytical as chronological--Historical Romance, Adventure Romance and Gothic Romance--and a fourth non-narrative stage--Political Discourse--which will interrupt the discussion of the Adventure Romance.

Buchan's earliest fiction closely follows the theory and practice of Stevenson, being Scottish Historical Romances which attempt to evoke the spirit of a place by discovering its appropriate narrative; there are three novels in question here, *Sir Quixote of the Moors* (1895), and *John Burnet of Barns* (1898), both set at the time of the outlawing of the Scottish Covenanters at the end of the Stuart succession, and *A Lost Lady of Old Years* (1899), set around the 1745 rebellion of 'Bonny Prince

Charlie'. All three involve many journeys and chases, but have their narrative centres in Buchan's homeland, the valleys of the upper Tweed and the upper Clyde, and the hills and moors between and around them. All three have strong love as well as military interests.

In *Sir Quixote*, the hero is an expatriate Frenchman whose sense of honour forces him to defend the Covenanters against oppression despite his Catholic upbringing, and, torn between conflicting duties as protector and guest, to flee from the Covenanter's daughter who he has come to love. In *John Burnet*, the hero is a young laird, wavering between the life of a scholar and that of a soldier, who is forced to defend his inheritance and his lover from the depredations of his soldier cousin, and in the process is forced to support and be supported by outlaw bands of Covenanters and gypsies. In *A Lost Lady*, the protagonist is the last of a noble but degenerate line who sets off on a series of picaresque adventures, only to meet by chance and fall in love with the wife of the Secretary to the Jacobite Prince, and to commit himself ambiguously and unsuccessfully to the Rebellion. If there are plenty of echoes and borrowings from Stevenson's *Kidnapped* (1886) and *Catriona* (1893), there are also a number of distinctively Buchanian elements which are important in the construction of his Romance of Empire.

The first points concern the two major versions of the 'other' which are found in these narratives: 'the men from the hills' and the 'opposite'. 'The men from the hills' are the outlaw bands of Covenanters, gypsies, or Highland clansmen, who choose or are forced to live close to a Nature as frequently malign as benign, and who are alternately presented as virile remnants of an earlier heroic age and as primitive throwbacks to an earlier stage of human development. The 'opposite' is the close rival in love and war, here best represented by John Burnet's cousin Gilbert, a *doppelganger*, the inversion of the hero, ruthless, virile, aggressive, masterful, insane. What is most important in both versions of 'the other' is the strange combination of disgust and admiration found in the attitude of the hero. The second point concerns the nature of the hero and his mission more directly. All three heroes are in some sense men with a code but without a cause, 'passionate moderates' in Janet Adam Smith's phrase.¹⁴ Only John Burnet pursues his love to fulfillment, and all three are ultimately detached from the major political and religious conflicts which engulf them. Again this is presented ambiguously, as a civilised and liberal sense of balance, but also as a deep sense of lack and loss. In addition to Stevenson's, there are two earlier, seventeenth-century rewritings of the Romance in play here: Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Buchan's earliest Romance heroes enjoy their quixotic freedom but there remains a yearning for Christian's discipline and goal. It is in Buchan's Adventure Romances that we see the idea of Empire gradually repressing the quixotic and reaching to become the celestial city; nevertheless, the ambiguities remain but in further

displaced forms, as the wilds of Scotland are gradually transmuted into the outposts of Empire.

The main narratives in question here are two short stories, 'A Reputation' and 'Fountainblue', from *Grey Weather* (1899) and *The Watcher by the Threshold* (1902) respectively, the novel *The Half-Hearted* (1900), where we see the Adventure Romance, as it were, 'under construction', and *Prester John* (1910), Buchan's only complete Imperial Adventure Romance. The three earlier works focus almost exclusively on the hero and the discovery of his mission, and are relatively little concerned with the nature of the 'other'. They are all tales of 'the coming man' (the popular young politician, writer, explorer) and have a dual structure: a period of crisis, trial, indecision, and apparent failure set in the wilds of Britain (the Scottish or Devon moors), followed by a briefer moment of glory and a heroic death as the failure is transformed into success by the rejection of the false honours of metropolitan Society and the anonymous sacrifice of the self to the cause of Empire. 'A Reputation' is in fact a comic parody of this process: the writer-protagonist Layden is an effete Englishman with no roots in the land, whose crisis is a fit of the vapours, and whose dedication is not to Imperial service but to Jingoist bombast. But the heroes of the other two narratives are noble Scots with deep roots in the land, and whose crisis is profound, since there the concept of service is complicated by a strong love theme.

This aspect, together with the division in the narrative, is seen most clearly in *The Half-Hearted*, where the first two-thirds of the narrative tend to read like a romantic novel of manners with pastoral interludes, whereas the final third, describing the hero's lone defence of the pass through the Indian Northwest frontier to save the Empire from the savage hords, moves towards the thrillers of AEW Mason and Edgar Wallace. It is this conflict of modes which marks most clearly the sense of a Romance of Empire under construction. Buchan's new sense of political commitment is signalled, to us embarrassingly, in the clarion call of Empire near the end of the narrative:

He had lost no inch of his inheritance. Where, indeed, was the true Scotland? Not in the little barren acres he had left, the few thousands of city-folk, or the contentions of unlovely creeds or vain philosophies. The elect of his race had ever been the wanderers. No more than Hellas had his land a paltry local unity. Wherever the English flag was planted anew, wherever the last stand was made in the march of Western progress, wherever men did their duty faithfully and without hope of little reward--there was the true land of the true patriot.¹⁵)

Before looking, in *Prester John*, at the rewriting of the 'other' which complements this affirmation of the heroic mission, we must make a brief and necessary detour through relevant aspects of Buchan's non-literary career and his non-narrative writing.

In 1901 Buchan was recruited along with a number of other young Oxford graduates (the group later known as the 'Kindergarten') by Lord Alfred Milner, the then High Commissioner for South Africa, to function under him as an unofficial secretary in the work of 'reconstruction' at the end of the Boer War. Buchan performed this role until 1903, working principally in improving the lethal sanitary conditions in the concentration camps into which the wives and families of many Boers had been rounded up, and in purchasing farmland for new British settlers to adjust the ethnic balance of the newly conquered Transvaal and Orange River Colonies. During this period Buchan consolidated his concept of Empire into a body of political, economic, and social theory in almost every respect consistent with Milner's own, partly at least through debate with the other members of the 'Kindergarten' who were to form the foundation of the later 'Round Table' Imperial discussion group. And at the same time he worked to appropriate the landscape of the northern Transvaal with which he fell in love ('white man's country' he was happy to call it)¹⁶ to serve as a displacement of Tweeddale in his *Romance of Empire*.

The writings principally in question here are the articles and essays on Imperial questions published in the *Spectator* during 1903-6 and in the *Scottish Review* from 1907-8,¹⁷ plus the books *The African Colony: Studies in the Reconstruction* (1903) and *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (1906). The journalism is largely limited to comment on specific contemporary Imperial issues--the mechanisms of Imperial Federation, the demands for autonomy in the Dominions and of the nationalist movements in Egypt and India, the arguments for indentured Asian labour and increased British settlement in South Africa--and for the articulation of Buchan's underlying belief in the cause of Empire, we must turn to the earlier and more complex forms of *The African Colony* and *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, theoretical works progressively infected by the mode of Romance.

The former is a 400 page work in three disparate parts: '1) The Early Masters'--a brief history of Southern Africa; '2) Notes of Travel'--Romanticised accounts of travel and field sports in the northern Transvaal based on Buchan's expeditions in connection with Land Settlement; and '3) The Political Problem'--a sophisticated analysis of the political, economic and social future of South Africa. The latter is a fictionalised symposium on Imperial questions set in an English country house built nine thousand feet up on the East African plateau; the participants are thinly disguised portraits of Rhodes, Milner, Rosebury, Buchan himself and so on; the social atmosphere is rarefied, and the debate is punctuated with various descriptions of decor, landscape, and expeditions into the tropical regions below. The work was published following the Tory electoral defeat in 1905 over Imperial issues, and the debate itself covers party politics, constitutional apparatuses, geography and race,

economics, philosophy, aesthetics and theology, all seen from the point of view of a rededication to the cause of Imperialism.

The astonishing range of this list and the formal complexity of these two works (further embarrassments of riches!) might suggest the way in which Imperialism was becoming for Buchan a creed above party politics, more important indeed than democratic government, almost a substitute religion for his father's Calvinism, a 'Church of Empire' in Alan Sandison's phrase.¹⁸) The creed of Empire was thus, for Buchan as for many others (Conrad, in certain attitudes, springs to mind), an almost desperate attempt to restore Romance, mystery and spirituality to a decadent metropolitan society polluted by the materialism of advanced industrial capitalism. And, in order to justify the appropriation of large tracts of territory outside Europe, concomitant with this holy cause is the myth of a racial hierarchy bolstered by social Darwinian theory to which Buchan is happy to subscribe. The following definition of Imperialism, offered by one of the participants near the opening of the *Lodge in the Wilderness* symposium is one which is supplemented but never contradicted:

I define Imperialism as the closer organic connection under one Crown of a number of autonomous nations of the same blood, who can spare something of their vitality for the administration of vast tracts inhabited by lower races,--a racial aristocracy considered in their relation to the subject peoples, a democracy in their relation to each other.¹⁹)

More concrete examples of this attitude would be Buchan's willingness to countenance the extinction of native peoples who would or could not adapt to the function of industrial proletariat in the Transvaal,²⁰) or his willingness to accept the myth of an ancient Semitic empire in Southern Africa (the Ophir myth, perhaps known most widely from Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*) rather than recognize the African (Shona) origins of the Zimbabwe ruins.²¹) It is important to restate that such a racial ideology remained dominant at the time Buchan was writing, though it was already under attack not only in the field of scientific discourse but also in the political sphere.²²)

The central point here, however, is that the contradictions in this creed of Empire and its myth of a racial hierarchy are both concealed and revealed in all Buchan's writing of this period, though with different degrees of displacement, from his practical political discourse through to his Romance narratives. It is in *Prester John*, though, that we see most clearly the ambiguity in the representation of the 'other' as non-European peoples.

The story opens under the strong influence of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, evoking the fantasies of adventure of a young Scots boy, David Crawford, who later travels to South Africa in the period after the Boer War; he becomes caught up in a great native rising against the British regime led by the Reverend John Laputa, a black western-educated Christian minister, who appears as the reincarnation of

Prester John, the legendary priest and king of a united African empire. In a final lonely, heroic encounter, David single-handedly overcomes Laputa and thus crushes the rebellion. In the by now familiar way, David's experiences reaffirm the Imperial faith, which in turn dictates the presentation of the African people:

I knew then the meaning of the white man's duty. He has to take all risks, recking nothing of his life or fortunes, and well content to find his reward in the fulfillment of his task. That is the difference between white and black, the gift of responsibility, the power of being in a little way a king; and so long as we know this and practise it, we will rule not in Africa alone but wherever there are dark men who live only for the day and their own bellies.23)

But if the native people *en masse* are depicted consistently as child-like or brutal primitives, the presentation of Laputa himself involves a considerable disturbance of the manichean theology of Imperialism. Reverting to the Romantic image of the noble savage, Buchan also lends Laputa those ambiguous trappings of the 'other' familiar from his Historical Romances, 'the man of the hills' and 'the opposite'. Laputa is permitted an expansive rhetoric larded with Biblical and Bunyanesque echoes in almost every respect similar to that of Buchan himself, but in the service of a rather different dream of empire; Laputa's image of 'sweeping and garnishing the house'²⁴⁾ allows a contrast to be made between the freshness of Africa and the moral and physical pollution of the metropolis; and at times the metaphoric code of the novel seems to accord him the status of Messiah, a King but in no 'little way'. This process is of course not single but is vigorously contested: Laputa is at times also presented as the petulant child or the savage; suggestions of Laputa's Semitic rather than African origins (again recalling the King Solomon/Ophir myth) are encouraged to blunt the disturbance to racial theory; and David's attitude to Laputa is compounded as much of horror and disgust as of admiration and worship. Nevertheless, this presentation does involve a significant subversion of the ideology of Imperialism, and the crushing of the African rebellion provokes a curious combination of elation and guilt.²⁵⁾

But it is in Buchan's Gothic Romances that the figuring of 'the other' creates the maximum of guilt and disruption. The principle narratives in question here are many of the short stories collected in *Grey Weather*, *The Watcher by the Threshold*, and *The Moon Endureth* (1912). We might also note here Buchan's first collection of essays, *Scholar Gipsies* (1896), which was published in the John Lane 'Arcady Library' and combines a lot of purple prose and some rural narrative into a very *fin de siecle* pastoral. There is a clear progression from this, through the rather more robust rural romance with comic and Gothic touches of *Grey Weather* to the full flowering of the Gothic mode in *The Watcher by the Threshold* and *The Moon Endureth*. For the sake of brevity, let us touch on just two stories: 'No Man's Land' from *The Watcher by the Threshold*, set in Scotland and providing a new variation of the 'other'

as 'the men from the hills'; and 'The Grove of Ashtaroth' from *The Moon Endureth*, which is set in Southern Africa and reworks the figure of the 'other' as 'opposite'.

The hero of 'No Man's Land' is a young Oxford don specialising in Northern Antiquities who spends his vacations engaging in field sports in the wilds of the North. In the heart of the Galloway hills, he comes upon traces of the survival of a cave-dwelling band of ancient Picts. He is captured by them, succeeds in communicating with them and learning of their culture, escapes and returns to Oxford, but is drawn back; finally, in order to avoid participation in a rite of human sacrifice, he brings down the cave and thus brings to an end the strange survival of the Pictish race. His report is laughed at in the academy and he ends the story a broken man.

The protagonist of 'The Grove of Ashtaroth' is Lawson, a rich half-Jewish city businessman, who gives up his job, travels to South Africa, and builds and retires to a magnificent but lonely country house in the isolated wood-bush country of northern Transvaal. In the grounds of the house are the remains of an ancient temple, which are revealed to be the last remnants of the Semitic Empire in Africa. This holy place, 'The Grove of Ashtaroth' of the title, calls to the semitic blood in Lawson, causing him to cast off the cloak of civilisation and revert to strange and barbarous rites. The narrator is a romantic Scotsman, who discovers Lawson's state, and though himself drawn by the ancient *temenos*, succeeds in dynamiting the grove, destroying the power, and bringing Lawson back to the paths of the commonplace, but at great personal cost.

The continuities with and displacements from Buchan's Historical and Adventure Romances are obvious and little comment is required, except to emphasise the strength of the sense of guilt and disturbance which accompanies the representation of the 'other' in this Gothic version. Such Gothic fantasies are by no means unique to Buchan in this period, but they are perhaps the closest that genre fiction comes to an overt acknowledgement that the figure of the 'other' as the primitive should be located not in an Africa deprived of history, but in the psyche of western man under advanced capitalism, and that the advance of Imperialism entails not the restoration but the further destruction of the holy.

Notes

1) An earlier and shorter version of this paper was delivered under the same title at the British Council (Japan) Bi-Annual Literature Conference at Hakone, in September 1988.

2) See, in particular, E.J. Hobsbawm *Industry and Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1968) and *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1987), and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

- 3) Robert Louis Stevenson 'A Gossip on Romance' *Memories and Portraits* in *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922) vol. XII pp.188-9.
- 4) Stevenson 'A Gossip on Romance' *Works* vol. XII p.189.
- 5) Stevenson 'A Gossip on Romance' *Works* vol. XII pp.200-1.
- 6) Stevenson 'A Humble Remonstrance' *Memories and Portraits* in *Works* vol. XII p.223.
- 7) See John G Cawelti *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), especially Chapter 2 'Notes Towards a Typology of Literary Formulas' pp.37-50.
- 8) Compare Jefferson Hunter *Edwardian Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982) pp.77-152.
- 9) Compare Brian V. Street *The Savage in Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) Chs.3-4.
- 10) See Peter Berresford Ellis *H.Rider Haggard: A Voice from the Infinite* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) pp.31-88.
- 11) See Jeffrey Richards (ed.) *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) and Patrick Brantlinger 'Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent' in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (ed.) *"Race", Writing, and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) pp.185-222.
- 12) See Frederic Jameson *The Political Unconscious* (London: Methuen, 1981) and Franco Moretti *Signs Taken for Wonders* (London: Verso, 1983).
- 13) See Janet Adam Smith *John Buchan: A Biography* (1965; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Gertrude Himmelfarb 'John Buchan: An Untimely Appreciation' *Encounter* September 1960, reprinted in a revised version as 'John Buchan: The Last Victorian' in her *Victorian Minds* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1968) pp.249-72; and Alan Sandison 'John Buchan: The Church of Empire' *The Wheel of Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1967) pp.149-94. Mention should perhaps also be made of Richard Osborne's light but influential early study in *Clubland Heroes* (London: Hutchinson, 1953), and the only full-length critical work devoted to Buchan, David Daniell's pedestrian *The Interpreter's House* (London: Nelson, 1975).
- 14) See Adam Smith *John Buchan* p.96.
- 15) John Buchan *The Half-Hearted* (1900; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1920) p.309.
- 16) For example, in John Buchan *The African Colony* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1903) p.91 and *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (1906; London: Nelson, 1916) p.118.
- 17) The Scottish Review articles are reprinted in John Buchan *Comments and Characters* (London: Nelson, 1940) pp.87-128.
- 18) Sandison *The Wheel of Empire* p.149.
- 19) Buchan *A Lodge in the Wilderness* p.28.
- 20) Buchan *The African Colony* p.297.
- 21) Buchan *The African Colony* pp.7-11.
- 22) As regards science, see, for example, G.Spiller (ed.) *Papers on Inter-Racial Problems Communicated to the 1st Universal Races Congress Held at the University of London, July 26-29, 1911* (London: P.S.King & Son, 1911).
- 23) John Buchan *Prester John* (1910; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956) p.202.
- 24) Buchan *Prester John* p.156.
- 25) For a more detailed analysis of the ambiguities of Prester John, see Graham Law 'Imperial Themes: Conrad and Buchan' *Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Languages* (Faculty of General Education, Tokyo University) vol.35 no.3 pp.21-37.